

*R. W. B.*

SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, 1871.

Subject: The New Birth.

# PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

A Weekly Publication

OF

## SERMONS

PREACHED BY

### HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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## THE NEW BIRTH.

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“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”—JOHN III., 5-7.

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The thing meant in this passage was a great truth—a fact of the utmost importance, transcending any other that was ever made known to the race. It was the annunciation of a point of development which is to the last degree essential. But the form of utterance was figurative. Our Saviour was speaking to one of the rulers of the Jews—one of the members of the Sanhedrim—a man of great moral worth, of great excellence of character, apparently; but he had been brought up, as Paul was, with a conscientious and rigorous adhesion to all the service and ceremony and ritual of the Jewish Church.

Baptism was a part of the Jewish services. Much was made of it. When Nicodemus presented himself to our Saviour, it was all important to him, as Paul declares that it was to him. It was the *what-lack-I-yet* spirit. He came as a man who had made great attainments, but who was willing, if there was anything else, to find it out, and add it to his stock.

He unquestionably thought he was an eminent man in goodness; but if there was in Christ a polish for this eminent goodness, he would like to possess that. And it was this spirit of reliance on external ceremonies that was rebuked by these words, which have been much misinterpreted:

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Men have joined together baptism and the spiritual change wrought by God. It amounted substantially to the authentication of this ordinance of baptism on the part of our Saviour, with no less a helpmeet than the divine influence. There was baptism on the one side, and the Holy Spirit on the other; and these two were brought together.



At first sight, it looks as though it was so; but it was not. Here was a man who came to the Saviour full of Sabbaths, and holy days, and washings of hands, and baptisms; and when Christ told him he must be born of water, he readily assented to it. That was just what he had himself believed. But when Christ went on to say that the baptism of the Spirit must be added, a new truth was opened to him.

The allusion to baptism was an allusion to the ground on which Nicodemus already stood, and was not an authentication. It was but a historic fact. And to that was added the declaration that, except a man, over and above that, has the Holy Spirit, baptism is useless. To those who are without this regenerating power, baptism is of no comfort, and has no authority.

We are not to take this passage in its narrow and local interpretation. We are to get the full flavor of it by considering it as a part of the whole grand scheme of our Saviour in his earthly ministrations. As a teaching of Christ, it was not so much a thing new, as it was a thing that authenticated and gave authority to many things which existed before. It imparted great clearness to things which were already obscurely seen. It brought together in groups things which had been previously taught in a scattered way. But the substance of the moral truths which were taught by the Lord Jesus Christ had before been taught and used in the Jewish Church. And his ministry, so far as mere truth-telling was concerned, was based on the truths which had already been revealed by the old dispensation. The *originality of Christianity*, as it is called, you may search for in vain. The truths of it were in the things that were taught long before it was known. Experience revealed the notion to man.

But there was something distinctive in it. There was something which made it different from the old dispensation. And what was that? It was the distinct annunciation of Christ, made more and more emphatic toward the close of his life, that he himself stood personally to the race in the place of God. He declared that men must believe in him, in order to be saved. That never was known before. It was the revelation of God—that is Immanuel. It was the dawn of God manifest in the flesh. He assumed that he was himself that very divine Spirit, which was an original fact, and a characteristic one. But the other fact, and the one which, so far as we are concerned, is the most characteristic in the new dispensation, was that the human race, through him, are to move on the highest spiritual level, where their souls shall be under the direct control of the Divine Spirit. Such I believe to be preëminently the genius of Chris-

tianity. The annunciation was, that while, before, the race of man had been living in the flesh and to the flesh, the time had come when there should be the lifting up of men's spiritual nature, the opening of the whole sphere of moral faculty in man, and the direct contact of it with the Divine Mind, so that God should, as it were, interpenetrate man, and with his thoughts and feelings intersphere man's thoughts and feelings, in the new life to be developed on the old one. That is to say, there was to be a new potency, a greater fruitfulness, a higher education, a more resplendent development, of the higher spiritual nature of man. That whole territory which before had been but occasionally broken into, now and then developing, in some single instances, a prophet here, and a holy man there, was to be enlightened and warmed by the Holy Ghost; so that men in ranks, in masses, in continuously increasing numbers, and by and by in nations, and finally as the whole race, should be brought up into the glorious light and liberty and power of the sons of God.

It was the lifting up of the mind of man from its lower social and animal conditions to its higher, spiritual and divinely-communing condition, that characterized the teaching of Christ, who came with authority as God in the flesh, to announce that the spiritual kingdom had come, in which was to dwell righteousness; that the time had come when men were to enter into all the inspiration of the spirit of God; that the time had come when men were to be united as they never were before; that the time had come when men, by the power of the Holy Ghost, should have a power, a faith, a hope, and a love such as they had never before experienced.

These being the teachings of Christ, and the characteristic features of his dispensation, we come to this declaration that he made to Nicodemus, which was not a local and special teaching, but an annunciation of that truth which characterized the whole movement of Christianity as developed by the Lord Jesus Christ:

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

Here is reference to the body, and all that part of the mind which was ordained to take care of the body—its appetites, its passions, its pride, its selfishness, its faculties in their perverted forms—all that lower range of mental powers, which work from the flesh, and back to the flesh again, and remain in the lower realm.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

There is to be a resurrection, above these lower appetites and passions. There is to be a higher and nobler condition than that which belongs to the world. And the time for that has come. And Christ declares that unless a man lifts himself up into this higher



realm, he cannot be in the kingdom of God. In order to be qualified to enter that kingdom, a man's heart must be in a superior state of activity, and must be filled with high and divinely-inspired sentiments.

That was the teaching of Christ to Nicodemus. Of course Nicodemus did not understand it. He lost the meaning of it by literalizing it. He marveled and stumbled; and it is not surprising that he did marvel and stumble. Men cease to marvel and stumble at the doctrine of the enfranchisement of the human soul as they are developed into the higher spiritual condition; but men who continue to live under the full influence of their bodily conditions, characteristically do it.

The faculties which serve the body are the most active and the most productive yet, take the world through. Man is mightier as an animal than as a spiritual being. The affections are developed more in their lower range than in their higher sphere. The law of life, to ordinary men, even in Christian communities, is still the law of animal life, or of the very lowest forms of social life. The race is still a race low down. Although I believe there are more persons enfranchised into spiritual life now than at any former period of the world, yet, when you look at the race comprehensively, and form any just estimate of it, it may be said, almost without any exception, that mankind to-day are living in the sphere of the animal, and but a very little way up toward the possible in manhood.

So that if there ever was need of saying that man must be born again into the enlargement and exaltation of a higher sphere; if there ever was a time when men needed to have their eyes opened in respect to the necessity of such a birth, it is just now. With the wars that are still sounding in our ears; with the misrule that still prevails, the world over; and with the tendencies of public sentiment in the best nations of the earth, who shall say that this disclosure is not needed now? Seeing what civilization does, who shall say it is not needed? If such things are done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? If the average conditions of life in the best nations on earth are what they are, what must be the average conditions of life in savagism and the uncivilized portions? The myriads of the race, emerging, have scarcely freed themselves from the earth out of which they came, and are living in the very lowest possible conditions. No man, surely, can say that the race needs no change, no elevation, no divine and spiritual inspiration.

The noblest faculties of the human soul are those which are used the least, and, in wide ranges of being, apparently not at all. They are dormant. I suppose we scarcely ever know what a moral senti-

ment means, except in the most vague and obscure manner. We who have, from childhood, from the very cradle, been taught not to live by the senses, and have been inspired, by precept and example, with the thoughts and feelings which belong to a higher life, can scarcely understand the difference of co-related tribes and nations, where, from year to year, and from generation to generation, there is not, in the best of them, one single throb of lofty sentiment. And yet, this is the actual condition of myriads and myriads of the race to-day. Generosity, magnanimity, purity, absolute truth-loving, the faith and sense of the invisible, benevolence, disinterestedness, trust—all these supreme elements or sentiments are absolutely unknown; and men rise, and grow, and flourish, and fade, and die, and are succeeded by other generations, that go in the same circle; and the curriculum is repeated from age to age.

Thus, generation after generation, the noblest part of human nature has failed. Comparatively, the lower passions and desires, in mankind at large, are stronger than the reason; the reason is stronger than the conscience; and the conscience is stronger than the spiritual instincts. There is in human life very little spiritual inspiration; very little that men can get from each other; very little that they can get from society; very little that they can get from laws and institutions. The prevalent influences and tendencies in the world at large are carnal. They belong to the lower part of human nature. There is, consequently, very little fruit of the Spirit, in the world. If, therefore, there ever was any divine influence to give a new life and an upward tendency to human nature, it is no doubt in existence still.

I have already said that upon this state of facts Christ declared that the new kingdom was to be the development of the higher forces. Now the reason was to have manifestation; now conscience was to predominate; now love was to effulge; now the natural forces in man were to be developed. But there was to be an inspiration by direct contact of the human soul with the divine soul. There had come a period of time when, in the unfolding scheme of God's plans, human life and human nature were to be developed as they had not been before. They were to become higher, and broader, and stronger, and sweeter, and more fruitful.

The era of a more direct and a more universal influence of the higher sphere over the lower had come. The time of the action of the divine mind on the human mind by natural laws would be continued. And, in addition, there would be the giving forth of the Holy Ghost, and the shedding abroad on the human soul of divine love-bearing influences.

When it is declared, that unless a man is born again he shall not



see this new kingdom, it is simply the declaration that a man, in his animal being, or in his lower, passional nature, never will come into the experience which belongs to the purity of these higher feelings; that he never will know what is the joy, the strength, the sympathy, the beauty, or the power of this higher life; that he never will know what is in himself, nor what he can do. God has amplitude in him; but he does not know what that amplitude is until by the Holy Ghost the nobler elements of his being are developed, and brought into supremacy. Until we are born of the Spirit, until that part of us which is in sympathy with God is touched by the divine Heart, and we are brought into communion with God, we shall not see nor know the substance of that kingdom in which God and men dwell together.

This I understand to be the general enunciation of the doctrine of Christ, specially and personally. It is true in respect to every one, as it is true in respect to races and generations of men, that he cannot, except by the divine contact, rise into this higher sphere of life. No man can come to himself except the Father draw him. No man can come to God, except God lead him. No man can come to his own highest nature except under the influence of the divine Spirit. We do not even know how to find our way up to our vulgar selves except by the teacher's instruction and example. No man knows how to use his own tongue until the mother has taught him. Every man, in the lower forms of life, has to take things from other sources, in order to develop that which rudimentally is in him. And if this is so of the lower processes of mind, how much more is it so of the higher ones, and of the highest! Where shall we take counsel in respect to the things of God, if not of the divine Spirit? And Christ says that a man shall not enter the kingdom of God without being born of the Spirit. And that is true of every individual one among us.

"But," says one, "I do not believe in this instantaneous change of character. I have no doubt that men can be improved. I believe that men, by attending to themselves, to their thoughts and feelings, and to a proper use of help, may become better; but the doctrine of an instantaneous change of character I never believed before, and I do not believe now." Well, who ever said there was any such doctrine? The Bible never said it, and I do not say it. I do not say that character can change instantaneously except by a miracle. But a man's will can. All that precedes change of will may be gradual, and all that succeeds a change of will may be gradual; but the will itself changes, when it does change, instantaneously, at once. If a man is born again of the Spirit, it does not follow that he is born as quick as a flash of lightning. It does not follow that the whole



divine work is done with instantaneity. That is not the declaration at all.

Whenever a man comes to that point at which he decisively yields himself to the divine authority, and says to God, "Thy will be done," I hold that man to be converted. It is the coming over of his will from self-control to the divine control. Yielding one's allegiance to God is conversion. But the circumstances which led to this result may have worked through long periods of time. Some trouble or some prosperity, some new thought, urged under such and such circumstances; more truth presented; truth presented more clearly—these things may work little by little, and bring a man nearer and nearer to a point where he is willing to submit himself to the sovereign controlling will of God, and to enter the higher spiritual life. And the hour and the moment come in which the soul says, substantially, "Thy will, not mine, be done." And the transition is made.

Now begins another course of gradual influences. When a man has begun to live as a denizen of the new kingdom, a child of light, a son of God, he cannot live perfectly at once. He has entered upon a life in which he is like a little child. And he has everything to learn over again. He is introduced into a new sphere, and is acted upon by new influences. He addresses himself to whatever he does entirely in the light of duty. All his former impulses are changed. All his ideas are exalted. Many things are put down that were predominant before. Many things are lifted up that were low and ignoble before. There is a new realm opened to him, with many new things added, and many old things changed so that they seem new. And now it will require his whole life to rebuild in this new sphere the elements of character. So that the character is changed, not suddenly, but gradually, little by little, by accretion, fulfilling his purpose, at first feebly, but more from day to day, and more from year to year, the work of regeneration going on and on, until he becomes perfect in the higher life.

If, then, you object to a change of heart because it is instantaneous: No, it is not. Nor is it taught that it is. If you object to it because you think character is gradually formed, or undergoes a gradual change: So do I think, and so does the Bible teach; and your objection is no objection. I do not believe that men are ever struck, as with lightning, and instantly changed in character, being debased sinners one minute, and the next minute rapturous saints. I believe that men are subject to very powerful influences which change them very much; but I do not think the change is such as immediately to take away the old disposition and replace it by a

new one, or suddenly to transform the habits. These changes require long-continued exertion and labor. And if your objection to the doctrine of a change of heart lies in its instantaneity, you can withdraw it; for nature and revelation and experience all teach us that the change is a gradual progression from a lower to a higher state; such as that, when it is completed, we shall stand complete in Zion and before God.

"But," says another, "I object to the doctrine of this change by which a man becomes religious, as produced by the Divine Spirit. I see the law of causation as clearly in that which is termed *conversion*, as in any other mental process. It is an effect produced by definite, prescribed and perceived causes."

Who ever denied that? Not I, surely. When the divine mind acts upon my mind, it acts according to the law of my mind, as much as when I act on your minds I act according to the laws of your minds. If you are laboring under a mistake, and I correct the mistake, do I not change your intellectual state? but do I not do it through your intellectual faculties? If your mind is keyed low, and I change the key of your mind, and lift your soul into a higher condition, do I not do it according to the law of your mind? I think that the action of the divine mind is in concurrence with the law of the human mind; and when the Spirit of God enters a man, and enlightens and inspires and strengthens him, it is not done by any other process than that by which the mind is affected. God is infinitely wise; and shall he not know how best to manage the faculties which he has created?

"He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?"

And he that created the human mind, shall he not understand how to direct it? The engineer of a machine, does he not know how to run it? He that made a watch, does he not know how to set it a-going? And he that made myriads of minds, and has administered over men through ages, does he not know how to touch the springs of thought and moral sentiment, and all the powers of man's nature? Why do we need to fly to the supposition that if it is taught that God changes a man's nature, it is implied that it is done contrary to law, or even against law? Nay, there is no fulfillment of law more signal, more noble, than that by which the Father-heart of God inflames the hearts of men by natural laws divinely inspired, and leads them to a higher state and a nobler condition.

"But," says another, "I do not believe in those scenes where conversion is supposed to take place. I do not believe in revivals. I do not believe in meetings where men are excited, and carried away, and where they shout and pray till they scarcely know what



they are doing, and where some change takes place, they do not know what, and they are said to be converted. I do not believe in what men call *conversion*, when I see how it is performed."

Now, that there are a great many persons who are in such ways as these brought into states of mind that are transitory; that there are many persons who are inspired with impressions respecting themselves which are not valid in fact, no person can deny. It is not my purpose to say that all men are really converted who are called converted. Nobody could suppose this to be the doctrine taught in the Scripture.

But think of the objection that men are religiously influenced and brought into the church in consequence of the effect of meetings. Suppose you should hear a person laughing at schools, and saying, "I do not believe in education. Just see what they do? They take boys and girls, and put them into a house, and shut out all influences that attract their attention, and set them on benches, and give them books, and make them study, and read, and spell, and write, and cipher; and when they have dealt with them in this way for a given time, and filled their heads with this, that and the other thing, they send them home, and think that they are educated. But it is all an illusion, they are not educated." If you mean that they are not perfected in education, that is so; but is it not an honorable thing, and a rational thing, for one to wish to bring up his children with an education, and to lay the foundation of that education in this way?

A person wishes to perfect his manners. He goes to a dancing-school where all boorishness and improprieties are kept out. And he, among others, is put into various postures, and taught to place the right foot forward, and make graceful motions and proper bows and courtesies. And a man says, "Talk about grace! Being shut up in a room, and running about on the floor, and bowing and scraping, and moving backward and forward, and putting the body in a great variety of attitudes—is that what you call grace? I should think there was very little grace about that." But, after all, is not that the way to acquire grace? Is not a school where ease and elegance of motion and carriage are taught a school of grace? And if a person is shut up to the thing which you wish to educate him in, is it not normal and natural? When we organize a school, our object is to instruct those who enter it in those things in which they are deficient. If we want to educate men for their duties as citizens, we have campaign clubs, and meetings, and speaking and writing. If we wish to make a person a musician or an artist, we shut him up to music or art. If we wish to fit persons for social

life, we keep that special purpose in view in their training. And if we wish to inspire men with moral impulses, why not shut them up to moral influences, or put them where moral influences for the time being predominate over all others? If a man lives selfishly, and vainly, and proudly; if he lives carnally, is it not wise to hold up before him the claims of a noble, spiritual life? Is it not wise to expound to him the doctrines of Christ? Is it not wise to bring to bear upon him those influences which belong to the higher range of truth? Is it not in consonance with experience, and analogy, and philosophy, to do by men in religion as we do in music, or art, or any other department of human life?

When, therefore, men find fault with revivals and religious meetings, saying that they are artificial, I reply that every other means of education is artificial, just as much. A revival is nothing but a school for the education of the moral feeling, and is exactly adapted to the necessities of many men.

If you say that many of those who make a profession of religion do not live in accordance with that profession, my reply is that it is with this as with other things. You never saw an apple tree that did not have fifty blossoms where there was one that set and came to fruit. And it may be true that in a community where fifty men are impressed with religion only one will become a ripe Christian, while all the rest will more or less lose their impressions, and relapse into different degrees of inferiority all the way down. The imperfections of the processes of religion are no argument against their reality. They are as real as the processes of education, and business, and the mechanic arts. The same law governs them. And I claim for revivals of religion all that can be claimed for the means which are employed for the development of men in the different realms of secular life. They are normal and philosophical. And if a man says, "I do not believe in the fruits of such meetings; I have no faith in the pretensions of men who claim to be converted there," my reply is, You may not believe in them; but you ought not to disbelieve in them on account of the inconsistencies which accompany them. There are inconsistencies everywhere, and no more in revivals of religion than in many other directions. That there are many lasting fruits from this source, no one who is acquainted with the facts will deny.

Another objection is that men who profess to have been converted are no better than hundreds who make no such profession. Very likely they are not any better. What then? Very likely many men who are gathered into the church at places of conversion are hypocritical; very likely many of them are counterfeits; very likely



many of them are mistaken. But then, was it not better for them to have tried to do something, even if they did make a mistake and fall short, than to have sat still and done nothing? Supposing that there is such a thing as a higher life, is not he nobler who makes a strife for it, even if he cannot fly high enough to reach it, and falls back, than the man that does not strive for it?

Here sit a parcel of doleful critics, that say, "There is no such thing as scaling that wall." One and another make the effort (for they must scale it, or perish); but none of them goes quite high enough, and, exhausted, one after another falls back. And after five or six have failed, these critics say, "I told you so, I told you so." But those brave men who, having failed in their endeavors, fall back, are superior to those vulgar creatures who feel no aspiration, and do not lift a wing.

But you cannot tell whether a man has power or not until you see the inside of him. There are multitudes of men converted whose condition you cannot determine by what you see of them. There is a hidden life in them. The kingdom of God does not come with observation. Many a man has the kingdom of God in him when you do not know it, because you are not omniscient, and are not a discernor of spirits.

But, more than that, you have no right to compare one man with another. There is nothing in this world more false in principle than to measure men in that way, and say that one is not a Christian because he does not live so and so, and that another is a Christian because he does live so and so. It is not right to measure a man who is far down in the scale of endowment and privilege by one who is far up in these regards. Every man must be measured by what he himself is.

In the spring, I take a rose that seems to have lost almost all its vitality, and to be struggling for shoots; and I carry it to Mr. Turner, and say, "Give it a fair chance to grow." And he opens the ground, and gives it a generous quantity of rich earth, and it begins to throw out shoots, and it grows through the summer and reaches a height of six inches, and by autumn it is really blossoming. But suppose I should look down at this stunted rose, and then up at the large one, and say, "This is no rose at all, compared with that one which has grown nearly six feet, instead of six inches"? You must measure those roses by what they were when they started, and by the chances which they had for growth, and not by what they are now.

And in measuring men, it is not fair to say, "That man is a lovelier specimen than that man." You are not to go into the out-

ward history of one and another, and draw a parallel, and say, "This man was an old curmudgeon ; he was insatiate in his desire for wealth ; and he had acquired a vast property : but there was a little revolution in his affairs ; and he went to a Methodist meeting ; and there he became excited, and hallooed and yelled, and afterward came out a Christian ! but that man has always been generous, and kind, and upright, in his dealings, and he makes no pretensions to Christianity." There is no justice in such a comparison. It is probable that this man who was hard and grinding and avaricious, but who now calls himself a Christian, has made a greater struggle and a better fight for spiritual life than that other man ever dreamed of. He was low down ; but he received a spiritual shock, that set his mind at work. And he undertook to make a better man of himself. And gradually he emerged from his sordid, selfish condition, into a state where he was under the continual inspiration of God's love. And at last he became a man second to no other in the whole region. It took many years to do it, but it was done. And you must measure him by what he was at the beginning. You must take into account that at the outset he was low down in the scale. Ah ! he never had a mother that wept and prayed over him as your mother wept and prayed over you, critic ! He never had brothers and sisters who were a living interpretation of beneficence, as you had, critic ! He never had companions that inspired him with generosity. Everybody plucked at him ; and, with eagle's claws, as it were, he plucked at everybody. You, on the other hand, were brought up under the influence of the sweet interchange of kindness. You had advantages for growth and culture such as he knew nothing of. And in your estimate of him these facts must not be overlooked. There is many a man that you despise, and that you say is not a Christian, who, in the day of God's judgment will stand higher than you do, because, having received little, he grew much, while you, having received much, grew little.

But why should a man wish to find fault with such a truth as this of the Spirit's help ? Why should a man seek objections against this blessed doctrine, that a wicked man may change his heart ? Do you want to believe that a man who has begun must continue to go wrong, and become worse and worse all his life long ? Ought not every generous man's heart to be made glad by the faith that though a man's sins be as scarlet they may be washed away, and he become white as snow ? Should not the spirit of gratitude be inspired in us by the doctrine of the possibility of a change from a lower course to a higher ; by the doctrine that a man may be emancipated from the flesh, and need not live in these animal con-



ditions ; by the doctrine that God will meet us more than half way ; that he will go as far to find us as to find the flowers ? When rightly interpreted, it is the most glorious doctrine that was ever presented to man. It was this doctrine that was revealed by God, and made manifest through his Son in the flesh.

The time has come, then, when men no longer need to live in the flesh. There has come a new development. A divine spirit is given to every man who will accept it. And accepting it, he shall rise into a higher life. He will be born again, and will find himself drawn toward a better and more comforting state.

Is there any man here, to-night, who has been going down, down, down ? I do not say to you that unless you are born again you shall not see the kingdom of God. You know that as well as I do. But ah ! discouraged man, so often sliding when you thought your foot was safe, so often trying and failing, I come to you and say, *You may be born again.* There is hope for you. It is not necessary that you should go on from bad to worse. There is a power in God by which you may be quickened, emancipated, raised from the dead, born into a new life. There is hope for every man, no matter how bad he is, or how far he has gone in wrong courses. There may not be hope for you in your neighbor ; you may turn to him in vain for counsel ; so long as you look to men for help you may be shut up in darkness and despair ; but there is a God that will succor you. And you do not need to even speak to him. Open your heart, and let it lie open before him, and he will see it, and minister to it. Your mother does not think so tenderly of you as he does. Uncover your soul, and God will shine upon it. There is power in him to do for you that which, by your own unaided will, you cannot do for yourself. He will *work in you to will and to do of his own good pleasure.*

And I say to every man whom God has saved, Do not give up the lost. Do not cast the wanderers out of your watch and care. Hold on to your children, no matter what they have done. Hold on to your friends. Do not cast them off. Hope for men that have gone astray, and strive to rescue them. Work courageously for the release of those who are in the bondage of death. Do not despair of saving the youth.

And to all I say, as long as there is life there is hope. Till the last day, till your sun goes down, in the very last hour, remember that the dear Spirit of God hovers near you, and that by the power of his Spirit you may be enfranchised, and illumined, and made meet to inherit eternal life.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, our Heavenly Father, encouraged by the memory of days gone by. How many times, weary and faint, have we found refreshment in the tabernacles of our God! How many times, despondent and heavy of heart, have we been cheered and lifted up by thy power! How many times have we smitten on our breast, daring not to lift our eyes, and thou hast sent us away testifying of thy mercy and goodness, and of our sins forgiven! How often hast thou made the place of our meeting sweet! Our most sacred religious life thou hast granted to us in communion with thee, and in fellowship one with another!

And now, O Lord our God, we beseech of thee that thou wilt draw us again. Open thy nature to our thought. And if we cannot reach to compass the circuit of thy being, still thou canst grant unto us some knowledge of thyself. Thou canst shine, though we cannot take in all thy beams, nor by searching find thee out unto perfection. Grant unto every one of us so much of the knowledge of God as shall lift his heart above things carnal. Cheer us in the weary way of life. Encourage us to faith and perseverance unto the end. How many there are that fain would fly toward thee, but cannot! Condescend to such. And grant, O Lord, that thy Spirit may inspire in them the petitions which they know not how to utter! How many are there that know their great need, but know not wherein it consists. But thou, O God, canst call us forth. Thou canst lift the heavy weight. Thou canst dispel the gloomy cloud. Thou canst reach in to the hidden springs that give life. Thou canst make life where is death; and light, where is darkness. How many there are that pray for things that are not best! We beseech of thee that thou wilt answer them better than they ask of thee, and do for them, not what they wish, but those things which shall please thee.

We beseech of thee, O God, that thou wilt listen to those whom thou hast taught to pray. Grant unto them things right. And may they have hope, and trust, and royal confidence in God. Oh, may we not distrust thee. Every other one most dear to us may we distrust rather than thee, thou that canst not deceive; thou that wilt never go aside from thy work. May we abide in a steadfast confidence in the faithfulness of our God. Thou art our souls' help. All our help doth spring from thee. Thou wilt succor us, and that to the end.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt inspire us to pray, not alone for ourselves and those immediately under our care, but for others. May our hearts be enlarged. May we look out upon the multitudes that have none to care for them. May we search out those that need special divine grace; and may our prayers flow to thee, and be blessed to their conversion and to their edification in the Christian life. We pray that the spirit of prayer may be diffused among all our families. We pray that this whole Church may be brought up in a praying spirit, and that those especially who are laboring with the poor and ignorant may be moved of God to great power. And may we see the answers of their prayer.

And we pray for this city in which we dwell. Wilt thou cleanse it in every part of it. Bless those that labor for the reformation of morals. Bless those who labor for the establishment of wise laws, and a wise and incorrupt administration of them. Bless those who teach, and those who preach the Gospel. May thy churches be multiplied and strengthened. May their influence be salutary in this great community.

And we beseech of thee that thou wilt remember our land, and raise up all those institutions and instruments which are necessary for its evangelization. We thank thee that thou hast given us such a country and released us

from the burdens and cruelties of oppression; and that whilst others are suffering and are trodden down as the dust in the street, we are abiding in plenty and prosperity

May we not forget those that suffer as once we suffered. 'We pray for the despoiled, the outcast, the homeless, and helpless. And we pray that others may be speedily raised up on every hand to succor those who are most in need.

And we pray for the time to come when garments rolled in blood shall pass away; when the sword shall be sheathed; when the voice of desolation shall be no more heard in the land. Oh, for the times of education! Oh, for the times of true piety! Oh, for justice and love and fellowship among men! O Lord God, when shall the day come that men shall cease to be beasts and rend each other? When shall come those days of plenty and peace and gladness that are predicted? O Lord, hasten that day in thine own good time. Let the Gospel come forth, and unloose the powers of heaven above. May all the earth follow the voice of thy decrees. May the living power that is in thee be for the restoration of the image of God in man, for the lifting up of the race, and for its enfranchisement and establishment in all righteousness. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly. And to the Father, the Son and the Spirit shall be endless praises. *Amen.*

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#### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the truth spoken. Grant that it may touch the heart. Grant that it may encourage the desponding, enlighten those that are ignorant, and win those that are reluctant. May there be many that shall attempt this new life, not in their own strength, but leaning upon thine; not in their own wisdom, but inflamed by thine. Oh, that we might learn more and more how poor in fruit of enjoyment is the life of the flesh, and how full of the fruit of righteousness is the life of the spirit! Lift us into that sphere, and give us its deep tranquillity, its communion with God, its hope, its faith, and its victory. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*





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
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